AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. to 20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) An image formation apparatus comprising:

~~plural input means for inputting image data;~~

~~recording means for recording~~ a recording unit adapted to record an image on the basis of an image signal input by any of [[said]] plural input ~~means~~ units;

~~masking means for masking~~ a masking unit adapted to mask the image to be recorded by said recording ~~means~~ unit, so as to provide a sheet-edge margin; and

~~control means for controlling~~ a control unit adapted to control a masking area of said masking ~~means~~ unit, on the basis of by which of said plural input ~~means~~ units the image data [[was]] is input.

22. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 21, wherein said plural input ~~means~~ units include at ~~least~~ least a reading ~~means for reading~~ unit adapted to read an original image, ~~and~~ and a reception ~~means for receiving~~ unit adapted to receive the image data from a host computer.

23. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 22, ~~further comprising masking control means for expanding~~ wherein said control unit expands an image area up to the vicinity of a sheet edge by reducing the masking area of said masking ~~means~~ unit when the image is recorded based on the image signal from said reception ~~means~~ unit.

24. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 23, further comprising ~~means for permitting~~ a permitting unit adapted to permit said ~~masking~~ control ~~means~~ unit to reduce the masking area when the image is recorded based on the image signal input from said reception ~~means~~ unit, and ~~inhibiting~~ adapted to inhibit said ~~masking~~ control ~~means~~ unit from reducing the masking area when the image is recorded based on the image data read by said reading ~~means~~ unit.

25. (Currently Amended) An image formation apparatus comprising:

~~reading means for reading~~ a reading unit adapted to read an original image;

~~reception means for receiving~~ a reception unit adapted to receive an image signal from a host computer;

~~recording means for recording~~ a recording unit adapted to record an image on the basis of the image signal input by said reading ~~means~~ unit or said reception ~~means~~ unit;

~~masking means for masking~~ a masking unit adapted to mask the image to be recorded by said recording ~~means~~ unit, so as to provide a sheet-edge margin; and

~~control means for controlling~~ a control unit adapted to control a masking ~~area~~ amount of said masking ~~means~~ unit, on the basis of by which of said reading ~~means~~ unit and said reception ~~means~~ unit the image signal [[was]] is input.

26. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 25, further comprising:

~~masking control means for controlling~~ a masking control unit adapted to control, in order to expand an image area up to the vicinity of a sheet edge, said masking ~~means~~ unit to reduce the masking ~~area~~ amount on the basis of reception of a command to reduce the masking ~~area~~ amount of said masking ~~means~~ unit; and

~~means for permitting~~ a permitting unit adapted to permit the reduction of the masking ~~area~~ amount only when the image is recorded based on image data input by said reception ~~means~~ unit.

27. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 25, wherein said masking ~~means~~ unit comprises

~~masking signal generation means for generating~~ a masking signal generation unit adapted to generate a masking signal, and

~~logical calculation means for performing~~ a logical calculation unit adapted to perform logical calculation to the image signal and the masking signal generated by said masking signal generation ~~means~~ unit.

28. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 25, wherein said recording ~~means~~ unit comprises

a semiconductor laser,

~~means for scanning~~ a scanning unit adapted to scan a laser beam generated by said semiconductor laser, and

~~detection means for detecting~~ a detection unit adapted to detect the laser beam scanned by said scanning ~~means~~ unit.

29. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 28, wherein said masking ~~means~~ unit masks the laser beam in a main scanning direction and a sub scanning directions of the laser beam.

30. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 28, wherein said masking ~~means~~ unit controls masking in a main scanning direction on the basis of a detection signal of said detection ~~means~~ unit.

31. (Currently Amended) An image masking control method comprising:

~~an input step of inputting an image from any of plural input means for inputting image data;~~

a masking step of masking [[the]] an image input from any of plural input units ~~to be recorded~~ so as to provide a sheet-edge margin;

a masking control step of controlling a masking area in said masking step, on the basis of by which of the plural input ~~means~~ units the image data [[was]] is input; and

a recording step of recording the image on the basis of [[an]] the image signal input from any of the plural input ~~means~~ units ~~in said input step~~.

32. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 31, wherein the plural input ~~means~~ units include at least a reading ~~means for reading~~ unit adapted to read an original image, and a reception ~~means for receiving~~ unit adapted to receive the image data from a host computer.

33. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 32, wherein, in said masking step, when the image is recorded based on the image signal from the reception ~~means~~ unit, an image area is expanded up to the vicinity of a sheet edge by reducing the masking area in said masking step.

34. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 33, wherein it is permitted to reduce the masking area when the image is recorded based on the image signal input from the reception means unit, and it is inhibited to reduce the masking area when the image is recorded based on the image data read by the reading ~~means~~ unit.

35. (Currently Amended) An image masking control method comprising:

~~a~~ reading step of reading an original image;

a reception step of receiving an image signal from a host computer;

a masking step of masking the image ~~to be recorded~~ so as to provide a sheet-edge margin;

a ~~control step of controlling~~ control unit adapted to control a masking ~~area~~ amount in said masking step, on the basis of ~~by which of plural input means the image signal was input~~ whether the image is read in said reading step or received in said reception step; and

a recording step of recording an image on the basis of the image signal input in said reading step or said reception step.

36. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 35, further comprising

~~a masking control step of performing~~ a masking control step adapted to control, in order to expand an image area up to the vicinity of a sheet edge, masking control to reduce the masking ~~area~~ amount on the basis of reception of a command to reduce the masking ~~area~~ amount,

wherein it is permitted in said masking control step to reduce the masking area only when the image is recorded based on image data input in said reception step.

37. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 35, wherein said masking step comprises

~~a masking signal generation step of generating~~ a masking signal generation unit adapted to generate a masking signal, and

a logical calculation step of performing logical calculation to the image signal and the masking signal generated in said masking signal generation step.

38. (Original) A method according to Claim 35, wherein said recording step comprises

a step of scanning a laser beam generated by a semiconductor laser, and

a detection step of detecting the laser beam scanned in said scanning step.

39. (Original) A method according to Claim 38, wherein said masking step masks the laser beam in a main scanning direction and a sub scanning directions of the laser beam.

40. (Original) A method according to Claim 38, wherein said masking step controls masking in a main scanning direction on the basis of a detection signal in said detection step.

41. (Currently Amended) An image formation apparatus comprising:

~~scanning means for scanning~~ a scanning unit adapted to scan laser beams emitted from plural lasers;

~~input means for inputting~~ an input unit adapted to input image data corresponding to the plural ~~lasers~~ laser beams; and

~~generation means for generating~~ a generation unit adapted to generate plural [[a]] masking ~~signal~~ signals, each to control light emission of ~~each~~ a corresponding one of the plural lasers,

wherein the plural masking signals are generated by said generation ~~means~~ unit at mutually independent ~~timing~~ timings.

42. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 41, further comprising ~~detection means for detecting~~ a detection unit adapted to detect a laser beam scanned, so as to generate a sync signal.

43. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 42, wherein said generation ~~means~~ unit generates each of the plural masking signals on the basis of each of the plural laser beams detected by said detection ~~means~~ unit.

44. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim [[43]] 42, wherein said generation ~~means~~ unit generates each of the plural masking signals on the basis of the single laser beam detected by said detection ~~means~~ unit.

45. (Currently Amended) An image masking control method comprising:

a scanning step of scanning plural lasers;

an input step of inputting image data corresponding to the plural lasers; and

a generation step of generating [[a]] plural masking ~~signal~~ signals, each to control light emission of ~~each~~ a corresponding one of the plural lasers,

wherein the plural masking signals are generated in said generation step at mutually independent timing.

46. (Original) A method according to Claim 45, further comprising a detection step of detecting a laser beam scanned, so as to generate a sync signal.

47. (Original) A method according to Claim 46, wherein said generation step generates each of the plural masking signals on the basis of each of the plural laser beams detected in said detection step.

48. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim [[47]] 46, wherein said generation step generates each of the plural masking signals on the basis of the single laser beam detected in said detection step.